



STUDENT WORKBOOK



Module – Burnover Fatalities: Looking at the Numbers

Overview

This module is intended to raise awareness of the statistics of burnover fatalities.

Exercise/Discussion: Devil's Advocate

Some burnovers and entrapments may have resulted from decisions that seemed reasonable at the time, given the situation. Provided the same situation, but viewed in a different way, alternative decisions can be proposed. Assuming the role of the “Devil’s Advocate” during the decision making process can provide such an alternative viewpoint. It may also give crewmembers that are not confident to voice their safety concerns in front of a group a way to share them.

What if someone on your crew was formally responsible for assuming the Devil’s Advocate role during decision making processes? In other words, crew supervisors would be giving the Devil’s Advocate appointee permission for this role.

Characteristics of a Devil’s Advocate:

- knowledgeable, experienced, respected firefighter
- assigned this role as part of their daily fire operational duties
- be expected to develop and provide alternative decisions/viewpoints using the same information used by others on the crew
- verbalizes questions that others may be thinking – even uncomfortable questions
- committed to safe and effective crew operations

Consider the benefits of using an assigned “Devil’s Advocate” on your team, module or crew.

Remember that it is always everybody’s responsibility to speak up and address safety concerns. The “Devil’s Advocate” position does not relieve this personal responsibility. If you see something, say something.



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Discussion Topics

#1 Would you consider assigning someone on your module/crew to play the “Devil's Advocate”? If so, use the following as guidelines for this role:

What playing the “Devil’s Advocate” “sounds” like:

- “It’s my job to see this differently.....”
- “Since everyone sees it that way, consider this other option as well....”
- “I have the same information you have and I made sense of it differently, this is what I think”
- “It looks like everyone is seeing this the same way; here is another way to look at it...”

What playing the “Devil’s Advocate” is NOT:

- Going around your supervisor or others making decisions
- Telling crew members and supervisors that the wrong decision is being made
- Questioning every single decision that is made
- An avenue to avoid a tough assignment, may be a rotating duty

What might be some additional ways to the “Devil’s Advocate” can verbalize their alternative viewpoints?

#2 Tactical Pauses

Most turnover events occurred between 1400 and 1630. Taking a tactical pause at 1400 during wildland fire operations can be a helpful tool to reassess your situation. It can draw attention to the fact that you’re entering the hottest, driest, statistically most dangerous part of the day and increased caution is in order.





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Are there other appropriate times that tactical pauses may be implemented?

When taking a tactical pause, what elements of situational awareness should you consider?

Module Evaluation QR code



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